

Proclamation 8739 of October 14, 2011**Blind Americans Equality Day, 2011**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Generations of blind and visually impaired Americans have dedicated their passion and skills to enhancing our national life—leading as public servants, penning works of literature, lending their voice to music, and inspiring as champions of sport. On Blind Americans Equality Day, we celebrate the achievements of blind and visually impaired Americans and reaffirm our commitment to advancing their complete social and economic integration.

My Administration is dedicated to ensuring Americans with disabilities have every opportunity to reach their full potential. Last year, I signed the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act to set new standards that enable people living with disabilities to access broadband, digital, and mobile innovations. To help level the playing field for employment, we are working to improve the Federal Government's compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Making electronic and information technology 508 compliant will give applicants with disabilities a fair chance and allow employees with disabilities to use necessary tools while on the job. By taking these steps, my Administration reaffirms its pledge to openness by making sure that people with disabilities can better access all the information the Federal Government has placed online.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the passage of the Randolph-Sheppard Act. For decades, the legislation has provided openings for blind Americans to work as vendors on Federal property, creating meaningful entrepreneurial opportunities and enabling them to contribute to our economy. These jobs have enriched the lives of those participating in the Randolph-Sheppard program and enhanced public understanding of blindness for those who have interacted with the program's vendors.

Though we have made progress in the march to equality for the blind and those with low vision, there is still more work to be done. In addition to improving access to technology and employment opportunities, this January, I signed the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act. This landmark legislation requires electric and hybrid car manufacturers to add sounds to alert all pedestrians to the presence of these unusually quiet vehicles. These provisions will help increase the safety and independence of blind and visually impaired Americans.

By joint resolution approved on October 6, 1964 (Public Law 88–628, as amended), the Congress designated October 15 of each year as “White Cane Safety Day” to recognize the contributions of Americans who are blind or have low vision. Today, let us recommit to forging ahead with the work of perfecting our Union and ensuring we remain a Nation where all our people, including those living with disabilities, have every opportunity to achieve their dreams.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 2011, as Blind Americans Equality Day. I call upon public officials, business and com-

munity leaders, educators, librarians, and Americans across the country to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8740 of October 24, 2011

United Nations Day, 2011

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In 1945, 51 nations in a world shaken by war signed the Charter of the United Nations. Determined to move beyond an era of violence and uncertainty, these pioneers aimed to prevent conflict by addressing its causes. Today, the United Nations provides a forum to seek lasting peace by mediating international disputes, advancing human rights, and fostering global cooperation. On United Nations Day, we join our 192 fellow member states in celebrating the founding ideals of the Charter, and we recommit to the global pursuit of peace, justice, and human dignity.

Built out of the ashes of war and genocide, the United Nations emerged as a vehicle for human progress. Recognizing the power and virtue of working in concert, the founders of this institution set out to mend the wounds caused by World War II, embrace peace over chaos, and lay the foundation for global cooperation on shared goals. Now, as the fates of nations become ever more intertwined, the leadership, staff, and member states of the United Nations continue to play an essential role in addressing global issues—from public health and economic development to climate change, transnational terrorism, and nuclear proliferation.

Extraordinary events have reminded the world that the collective action of ordinary citizens can lead the march toward liberty and justice. At a time of dramatic political transformation, the United Nations can embrace democratic movements and stand beside those who reject tyranny and oppression and look to the promise of freedom and prosperity. Together, we will help realize the aspirations of peoples long denied the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

The men and women who created the United Nations understood that peace is not simply the absence of war. The global community must continue not only to promote stability, but also defend the right of all peoples to live free and the right of all nations to chart their own course. The United States, working in and with the United Nations, will never accept a flawed status quo, but will pursue with vigor the world as we know it can be.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Con-